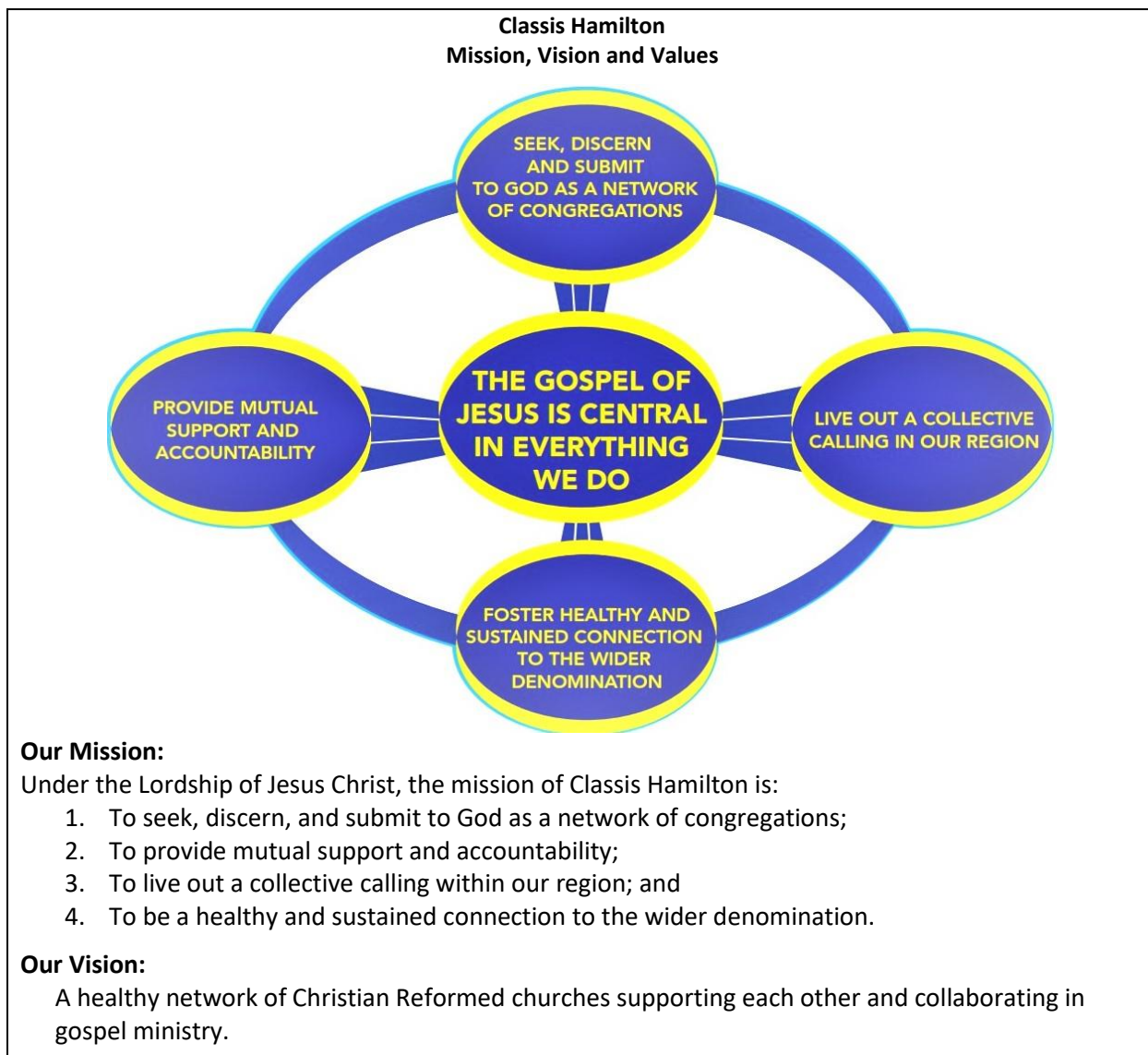




Minutes of a Meeting of CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Date: May 25, 2021 Time: 9:00 AM

Venue: Via Zoom; Host Church: Calvary CRC, Flamborough



Meeting Officers and Functionaries

Chair: Ken Benjamins

Vice-Chair: Ben Ponsen

Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk

Reporter: Meadowlands Fellowship CRC Delegate

Synodical Deputies:

Jeff Klingenberg, Classis Niagara; Hendrik Bruinsma, Classis Toronto; Sid Couperus, Classis Huron

Zoom Administrator

Al Postma

Meeting Delegates:

| Church | First Name | Last Name | Title |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Ancaster CRC | Siebert | VanHouten | Minister Delegate |
| Ancaster CRC | Arlene | Bennink | Elder Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Everett | Vander Horst | Pastor Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Ken | Tigchelaar | Elder Delegate |
| Meadowlands Fellowship | Marcia | Hosmar | Deacon Delegate |
| Hope | William | Koopmans | Pastor Delegate |
| Hope | Jake | Ellens | Elder Delegate |
| Hope | Dan | De Young | Deacon Alternate |
| New Street | Joel | Bootsma | Pastor Delegate |
| New Street | Geoff | Weinstein | Elder Delegate |
| New Street | John | Dekker | Deacon Delegate |
| Faith | Cara | DeHaan | Pator Delegate |
| Faith | Rob | Schaafsma | Elder Delegate |
| Faith | Rob | VanStaalduinen | Deacon Delegate |
| Calvin | Ken | Benjamins | Pastor Delegate |
| Calvin | Brad | Dykman | Elder Delegate |
| Calvin | Ben | Lammers | Deacon Delegate |
| Calvary | Gareth | Harker | Pastor Delegate |
| Calvary | Raymond | Schuurman | Elder Delegate |
| Calvary | Alice | Groen | Deacon Delegate |
| Hagersville Community | Davis | Miedema | Elder Delegate |
| First Hamilton | Hayden | Regeling | Pastor Delegate |
| First Hamilton | Jules | de Jager | Elder Delegate |
| First Hamilton | Jan | Disselkoen | Deacon Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Michael | Bootsma | Pastor Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | David | Rumph | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Eric | Tisch | Deacon Delegate |
| New Hope | Steve | Dykstra | Emerging Church |
| Mt. Hope Community | Mark | Demik | Elder Delegate |
| Mt. Hope Community | Sandi | Buwalda | Deacon Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Willem | de Vries | Pastor Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Jeff | Hogeterp | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Jeff | Vandermeer | Pator Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Ada | Kloet | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Ann | Oosterveld | Deacon Delegate |
| Bethel | Peter | ven der Meulen | Elder Delegate |
| Bethel | Walter | Kloostra | Elder Delegate |
| Bethel | Chris | DeWeerd | Deacon Delegate-am |
| Maranatha | Ben | Ponsen | Pastor Delegate |
| Maranatha | Ray | Elgersma | Elder Delegate |
| Maranatha | Maurice | Houwer | Deacon Delegate |

Meeting Details: (Due to technical challenges and reporting delays, matters recorded in these minutes may not have been dealt with in the exact order recorded herein.)

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS

- 1.1. At 9:00 AM, Gareth Harker, pastor of Calvary CRC, Flamborough, led devotions based on the story of Pentecost in Acts 1 and 2. Like the disciples who waited in Jerusalem not exactly knowing what was to come, we are wondering what will happen after the pandemic caused by COVID-19 has passed. As a church, we also seem to be retreating. We need to be engaged in prayer asking two questions. What are you doing Lord? What do you want from us? Just like the disciples, we do not really understand what is going on and where the Church will go next. This is a time of learning. Prayer is central to asking our two questions. Our prayers are heard but it may take a while before we understand the answer. Gareth then led in prayer.
- 1.2. Next Raymond Schuurman, elder of Calvary CRC, gave an update of ministry at their church. He shared that the congregation remains active in a number of ways. In the area of outreach, the congregation delivers food to the needy in downtown Hamilton. There are also a group of dedicated members who continue to engage Sunday school aged children on Zoom. Another group does the same with the young people. They also encourage communication and personal relationships between members even when that needs to be at a distance during the pandemic. Finally, he expressed much praise for the work and dedication of Pastor Gareth.
- 1.3. Vice-Chair, Ben Ponsen then prayed for Calvary CRC as well as for the sessions of the day.

2. TEN MINUTE BREAK

3. CALL TO ORDER

- 3.1. Chair of Classis, Ken Benjamins, called the meeting to order, welcomed all delegates, synodical deputies and introduced some guests who had been invited to the meeting. He offered some brief comments regarding the process for the day, especially in light of the electronic limitations that might be experienced.
- 3.2. The Chair of Classis pointed out that the meeting was ahead of schedule which was good because one of the synodical deputies would need to leave the meeting no later than 10:45 AM due to a funeral at Holland Christian Homes. He expressed the hope that the two matters for which the synodical deputies needed to be present in executive session might be completed by that time. It was noted that, should the matters needing synodical deputy concurrence not be completed by the time Hendrik Bruinsma had to leave, it would be acceptable for the remaining two deputies to provide the needed decision.
- 3.3. The Chair then asked the stated clerk to report on the attendance. The stated clerk reported that all the churches were represented by the delegates reported on their credentials except for one deacon delegate from Hagersville Community CRC and one elder delegate from Mount Hope Community CRC were unable to attend.
- 3.4. The Chair drew attention to the Covenant for Office Bearers that was printed in the Agenda and asked all delegates to indicate their continued commitment to the Covenant by filling in the Zoom poll. All delegates confirmed their commitment.
- 3.5. After this the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis Hamilton was properly constituted.
- 3.6. The Chair then **RULED THAT:** The Agenda and the Addendum as communicated to the churches and delegates are approved for discussion and action where appropriate.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.1. The Chair drew the attention of the delegates to the following matters which had been presented as a consent agenda in the agenda for classis.

CONSENT AGENDA

CMT REPORT (INCLUDING CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEES)

Chair's Report

RECOMMENDED THAT: Joel Bootsma be elected as Chair of Classis for the period June 1, 2021 until May 31, 2022.

RECOMMENDED THAT: Joel Bootsma and Michael Bootsma be elected as members of the Classis Home Missions Committee.

RECOMMENDATION THAT: Brady DeBoer and Hannah Whetstone be elected as members of the Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team.

Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee Report

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton approve the disbursements of these funds in the following amounts:

| Student Name | Year | Seminary | Location | Recommended Loan |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Matthew Guichelaar | 3rd | Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) | residence | \$8,837.67 |
| Joshua Schoon | 2nd | CTS | residence | \$4,923.85 |
| Jolene Veenstra | PT | Mac Div | residence | \$2,658.47 |
| Jennifer Heidinga | 2nd | CTS | distance | \$12,625.25 |
| Nina Drenth | PT | Wycliffe | residence | \$2,901.77 |
| David van Dokkumburg | 1st | CTS | residence | \$14,527.27 |
| Peter Krannenburg | 2nd | CTS | distance | \$10,256.90 |
| Total Forgivable Loan Awards | | | | \$56,731.18 |

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton approve the loan forgiveness actions of the CHCC.
Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee

RECOMMENDED THAT: The report by CHHMC be received for information.

Classis Hamilton Campus Ministry Committee

RECOMMENDED THAT: The report by CHCMC be received for information.

Staff Reports

RECOMMENDED THAT: The reports by staff be received for information.

External Ministry Reports

RECOMMENDED THAT: The external reports from the Canadian Ministries Director, Redeemer University, and World Renew be received for information.

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work of the CMT to date as reported to the churches in its Minutes and the Agenda.

CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE

Classis Interim Committee and Stated Clerk's Report

RECOMMENDED THAT: The amendments to Rules of Procedures 6.2.2., and 11.3 and its appendix as reported in the Agenda be approved.

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton approve William Koopmans, Ken Tigchelaar, Marcia Hosmar, Gillian Bruce and Ben Ponsen as a single slate of nominees to serve as directors of the corporation to be elected during the annual meeting of members later in the day.

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work of the CIC to date as reported to the churches in its Minutes and in the Agenda.

- 4.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the consent agenda as noted above is approved.
5. MEETING ADJOURNED TO CONDUCT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
 - 5.1. After reconvening from the AGM, Cara DeHaan prayed for the work of the CIC/BOD and classis committees as well as those servants charged with leadership in relation to corporate responsibilities.
 - 5.2. Gillian Bruce also shared that the search for a stated clerk, after the current stated clerk's retirement on June 30, 2021, had not yet been completed and asked classis to approve a motion to permit the CIC to make the appointment subject to confirmation by the October classis meeting.
 - 5.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis authorized the CIC to appoint a stated clerk conditional on the approval of classis at the October meeting.
6. EXECUTIVE SESSION DECLARED
 - 6.1. The Chair of Classis announced the classis would be entering into executive session.
 - 6.2. All those present who were not delegates, members of the CIC, Synodical Deputies, the Zoom administrator, or Regional Pastors, were informed that they were being moved to the waiting room by the Zoom administrator during the executive session.
 - 6.3. The minutes of the executive session were recorded separately. Only the decisions are recorded in these minutes.
 - 6.4. With the concurrence of the synodical deputies, classis **DECIDED** that Josiah Bokma is honourably released as a minister of the Word in accordance with Church Order, Article 14-b.
 - 6.5. With the concurrence of the synodical deputies, classis **DECIDED** the Roelof Peereboom is dismissed as a minister of the Word in accordance with Church Order article 14-c.
 - 6.6. A number of people registered their negative vote which are recorded in the executive session minutes.
7. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT
 - 7.1. On behalf of the Credentials Committee, Mark Demik reported that Meadowlands Fellowship had requested approval for two elders, Tim Veenstra and Jolene Veenstra to administer the sacraments during the pastor's sabbatical from June 2021 until January 2022.
 - 7.2. The Credentials Committee recommended that classis grant the request.
 - 7.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approves the request from Meadowlands Fellowship CRC to permit elders Tim Veenstra and Jolene Veenstra be approved to administer the sacraments during the sabbatical of its pastor.
8. HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE PRESENTATION
 - 8.1. On behalf of the Home Missions Committee, Marian Lensink presented a brief report regarding their progress toward establishing a church plant.
 - 8.2. She showed a slide presentation of progress, intentional prayer and continuing research as to how plant churches in this day and age.
 - 8.3. Marian encouraged churches to apply for the missional grants from the Home Missions Committee.
9. CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – CHURCH RELATIONS
 - 9.1. Shawn Brix, Calvin Theological Seminary's Canadian Church Relations Liaison presented a report of the current state at CTS.

- 9.2. He showed a video from four CTS students engaged in distance learning.
- 9.3. He reported that nearly all degree programs are now online and that the learning requirements and progress are identical for in-class and online students. This allows students to switch back and forth between in-class and online learning as they progress toward graduation.
- 9.4. He also noted that online enrolment is increasing. Based on the present enrolment information, it appears that 85% of first-time students this fall will choose to learn online.

10. 30 MINUTE LUNCH BREAK

11. COD REPORT

- 11.1. After the lunch break, William Koopmans, Classis Hamilton's COD member, provided an update on the recent COD meeting. Most of the information covered has been shared in communications directly to the churches and on the CRCNA Website.
- 11.2. He highlighted a few matters including expressing concerns in regards to harassment experienced by the staff of Race-Relations, Office of Social Justice, Indigenous Ministry and Centre for Public Dialogue.
- 11.3. He also provided information regarding the SALT report. The full report is available at <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/structure-and-leadership-changes-pending>
- 11.4. He also shared a serious concern for Jenna DeVries, the daughter of Paul DeVries, COD chair. Jenna had experienced a serious disease which led to open heart surgery. She is now home, but is faced with a long recovery journey.
- 11.5. Siebert VanHouten offered prayer for the COD itself and for Jenna DeVries.

12. DISCERNING THE LORD'S LEADING IN A COMPLEX SEASON

- 12.1. Syd Hielema led classis in a workshop under this title by engaging the delegates in a discernment prayer exercise.
- 12.2. He first gave a brief history of his previous involvement in faith formation for the denomination. His first experience was as a member of a committee assigned to engage in a listening process to discern the thoughts of the classes in relation to guiding children to the Lord's table. It took six years to conclude that discernment process. From that experience, Syd learned that all weighty matters must be steeped in prayerful discernment. He noted that Word and Spirit are a two-way process. They reinforce each other. In our church planning, we often engage in strategic praying as David did when he lived among the Philistines. That type of prayer is not so much focussed on what God would have us do, but on asking God to bless what we have already decided. We need to turn that prayer around and truly ask what God would want us to do before we start any planning. He closed this introduction by pointing the delegates and guests to a book titled *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*.
- 12.3. During various stages of the further presentation, delegates and guests from each local church were sent into virtual breakout rooms to discuss the four mile stones established by the denomination and how they might affect our own churches.
- 12.4. Syd closed the session by referring to Revelation 1:12. There the Apostle John saw the vision of the seven lampstands through which Jesus is seen. He stated that like John's vision Jesus is seen in this world by means of the actions and behaviours of God's people, who together are the lampstands, the Church.

13. CLOSING COMMENTS AND DEVOTIONS

- 13.1. The Vice-Chair of Classis had to sign off his Zoom connection due to a severe migraine headache. Gareth Harker took the closing responsibilities on his behalf.
- 13.2. Since this was the last classis meeting which the current stated clerk would attend in that capacity, Gareth began by thanking him for his six years of service in that office. He shared that classis had decided to give the outgoing stated clerk a gift of a painting which he showed to the delegates. The painting is based on Psalm 1:3, "*He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.*" After reflecting on this verse, he closed in prayer.
- 13.3. Since this was the last meeting for the term of Ken Benjamins to chair classis and since the Vice-Chair was no longer present, the stated clerk thanked Ken for serving classis in this capacity and always being ready to serve the broader church in a variety of functions.
- 13.4. The Chair of Classis declared the meeting ended at 3:30 PM.

14. NEXT MEETING

- 14.1. The next regular classis meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2021.
- 14.2. Agenda materials for that meeting are due to be received by the stated clerk no later than September 14, 2021.

For a current list of functionaries and committee members, click on the following link:

<http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/functionaries.pdf>